



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

June 22, 2015

The Honorable Chip Shields, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

RE: House Bill 2320A

Co-Chair Shields, Co-Chair Williamson, and members of the committee, I am Heidi Steward, Assistant Director of the Offender Management and Rehabilitation Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of HB 2320A, and to answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

As drafted, HB 2320A is extensive. I will address components of the bill that are specific to the DOC, which accomplish the following:

- Changes language in ORS 181.800 from sex offender risk assessment “tool” to risk assessment “methodology” to allow use of appropriate methods and tools with various sex offending populations, and to allow for adoption of new or proven methods and tools as best practices evolve over time.
- Changes from DOC to the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision (BOPPPS) the responsibility to adopt a sex offender risk assessment methodology, and further requires this be done in collaboration with community corrections agencies, as these risk assessments are also used for persons on supervision in the community.
- Moves from DOC to the BOPPPS, responsibility for the assessment and classification to a level of persons convicted of a crime listed in ORS 163.355 to 163.427 and sentenced to a term of incarceration with the DOC.
- Moves from DOC to the BOPPPS, responsibility to notify the Oregon State Police of the results of the risk assessment for entry into the Law Enforcement Data System.

Background Information:

Since passage of HB 2549 in 2013, DOC has faced ongoing challenges drafting appropriate administrative rules for the assessment of sex offenders preparing for release from prison with assessments for females and young DOC inmates being particularly challenging. DOC and the BOPPPS have had extensive discussions to determine how best to accomplish the assessment, written exception, and classification duties under the new system and agreed to shift the entire responsibility to the BOPPPS, thereby keeping these decisions in one agency resulting in one state agency having a fiscal impact.

Further, the BOPPPS has historic experience and responsibility in reviewing and determining sex offender risk, including predatory status – DOC does not. Centralizing responsibility for the assessment and classification to one agency makes logistical sense.

Requested Action:

The DOC has collaborated closely with the BOPPPS, Oregon Youth Authority, Oregon State Police, and Psychiatric Security Review Board to develop this legislation, which provides technical amendments, improvements, and changes that are needed to implement Oregon’s risk-based sex offender level system. For the reasons explained above, DOC respectfully requests your ‘do pass’ recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

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